

GOSPEL
ALLIANCE
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Trusted With The Gospel

A thick, dark rope with a rusty metal ring, symbolizing trust and faith. The rope is coiled around the ring, and the ring is made of a dark, rusted metal. The background is a solid dark gray.

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CHAPTER 1: WHAT THE GOSPEL ENCAPSULATE

**TEXT: 1Thess.1:1-5, Rom.1:1-18,
Eph.1:1-21, Eph.3:1-20**

GOD’S REDEMPTION PLAN

In Gen.1, we have the account of creation. The repeated note in that account is “*and God saw that it was good...*” That statement defines the purpose of creation – the pleasure of the Lord, Divine satisfaction. That pleasure reached its crescendo when man was made in His image and likeness, God said it was very good, and God rested – He celebrated!

We see in Chapter 2 how God placed man in stewardship – in trust – of that creation. Man’s job was to ensure that creation is held unto the full satisfaction of God; he is to keep it from being corrupted, he is to replenish, he is to subdue it, all this to ensure that creation continually reflect the glory of its maker, and bring divine pleasure.

In chapter 3 we saw how woefully man failed in

this trust, and the result was that man, and the entire creation came short of the glory of God. That which was meant to be to the “praise of the glory of God’s grace”, that which was meant for His satisfaction, turned into a contradiction, and an object of His great wrath and displeasure (you could see how dissatisfied God is in chapter 6).

God, by His very nature, always stay true to His purpose. He will always secure His end, no matter the failure (as we may call it), or opposition from sinister forces; whether of men or devils! God’s purpose ultimately triumphs. So we see that there was already a redemption plan before the conception of creation. We see that plan being revealed right at the fall; “*the seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent*”, the scripture tells us. From then on the battle continued to rage against that seed (well, that is outside the scope of our consideration at this time), but then we see Abel killed, and Cain, who was of that wicked one, was roaming the face of the earth bearing seed after his kind, after his nature, a nature that stands in complete contradiction of God’s thought. The scripture said he went out from the presence of God; from God’s purpose, from His thoughts.

God continued His purpose through the generation of Seth. We see that in Genesis 5; how they labored under the curse! They knew that that condition was because there is a disconnect with God – not on the part of God, but on the part of man, for we see that God’s spirit was still reaching out to men. A few, indeed responded to that call, we read of Enoch, that he walked with God. But the generality of humanity strove with God, until God said my spirit shall no more strive with man. There was going to be a total annihilation of all of creation, but Noah found grace, and through Noah a generation was raised to carry on God’s purpose. Well, how that generation failed God and the tragedy of Babel is all written for our learning. Because man intent on pursuing his own course, the whole generation of men was swayed into idolatry by that wicked one. But God, true to his purpose, took Abraham from such idols (Joshua 24:2-3), and began to reveal Himself to him.

Through Abraham, God raised a nation through whom he was to re-introduce Himself to humanity. He gave them laws, ordinances and other symbolisms, that reveals His nature, and intention in bringing mankind back into

relationship with Himself. In order to secure His purpose in this nation, He put them through severe testing and disciplines that they may be a nation purified and conformed to His thought, so that they would stand out among the nations, reflecting the glory of God, and calling all men unto God.

But this nation failed miserably in this vocation. They wanted to be like every other nation. Again and again, they joined themselves to the idols of the nations all around them.

God raised prophets to call them back to their vocation as a nation. In that call, the prophets held God's thought out to them. We will find that very significant resounding phrase all through the writings of the prophets: "*The Word of the Lord came to me...*" It was to that the Lord was calling them unto, and with that is a severe warning of their rejection if they do not conform to this Word of the Lord. A new nation would be constituted in consonance with this Word, a nation after God's thought, a nation that will fulfil the divine vocation.

CHRIST, THE CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE GOSPEL

As we come into the New Testament writings, we see clearly that that word was Jesus Christ (John 1:1). He is that word, that has been calling out to man, calling man into God's thought and divine purpose; expressing that thought through the history and the dealings of God with men, and especially the nation of Israel. Right in time we see "*the Word became flesh, and dwell amongst us... and we beheld His glory full of grace and truth...*" (See John 1:14). That was what God is after in His long history with man; the full thought of God, the express image of God brought forth (See Rom. 1:2-4, and Heb.1:1-3).

That word was so expressive, but unfortunately, He came unto his own and his own received him not. In His word, "*their heart has waxed dross, and their eyes have they shut...*" (Matt. 13:15). All the disciplines of their religious instructions, and exiles, and slavery, came to nothing because, as a nation their heart was set on idolatry - of course in the NT writing we saw idolatry of a different form; Jesus said to those leaders, "how can you believe when you seek honor from one

another, and not the honor that come from God” (John 5:44). Their heart was engrossed by thoughts of self-glory, and self-gratification through socio- economic emancipation. Thus, they could not see God’s purpose as revealed in Jesus Christ. Infact they had a warp conception of the messiah, a messiah, after their own lust, and not after God’s thought as revealed by the prophets.

That is what idolatry does, it creates its own god, after man’s own thought, and blinds the heart to God’s thought. So we see how that they rejected this Word, as their fathers have always rejected the words of the prophets. But we are told, “*as many as receive Him, to them gave He the right to become the sons of God...*” So there it is, God’s purpose being fulfilled in Him; bringing many sons unto glory. Bringing humanity back to that glory, that satisfaction of the father. This then is the Gospel; **“The revelation of Jesus Christ, as the satisfaction of God’s eternal purpose”**

This eternal plan is so well expounded to us in the epistles. The Epistle to the Romans and that to the Ephesians is perhaps the most enunciated. We will take a few thoughts from Ephesians so as

to see Christ; the central message of the gospel. It would make a wonderful reading to consider that little phrase “in Christ” or its variant “in him” as used in this epistle, and gathering up all that is related to God’s purpose.

Read Chapter 1:4-6. We see here, in him, a people elected to be holy and blameless in his sight, just like Israel of old who God called “my first son”. This people here are adopted into sonship. Those who are fathers can tell us the great satisfaction that comes in seeing your sons grown up into a responsible man, and holding the ideals of the family. Such is the satisfaction of God in this people, they are a people of His pleasure, reflecting His glorious grace. This indeed has been His intention before the conception of the world, and here it is realized “in Him”; in His redemption, in His exaltation, in His proclamation, and ultimately in His eternal reign. It is summarized this way:

“And He made known to us the mystery of His will... to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ” v.9,10.

Well, this is nothing but the realization of God’s

eternal purpose. That is another way of defining the Gospel: **“God’s eternal purpose realized in Christ”**. I do hope we grasped that. If we will but stay a little to contemplate the person of God the Son, perhaps that will take a hold of us. Keep in mind that God’s purpose in creation and in redemption is for His own glory or pleasure (that of course is the elementary part of our catechism, but it is not so elementary after all). God’s pleasure and satisfaction is always in Himself. He is the perfection of beauty, the excellency on high. Therefore, for any thing to give him pleasure, it will be only to the degree to which that thing is conformed unto His image. Just by the way, what is “the fall”, what is sin? It is *“coming short of the glory of God”*, it is “missing the mark; the mark of God’s standard”. Now, this Jesus is the full expression, the full revelation of the glory of God. In John 17 He talked of the glory He had with the father before the world was (John 17:5), before ever one thing was made, He was the complete satisfaction of the Father. Him has the Father brought into creation, so that creation may be conformed into that which answer to God’s eternal purpose.

You see brethren it is such a grand thing to be in

Christ. When we realize this, then we come to understand what the apostle meant when he said *“If any man be in Christ, He is a new creation”* (2 Cor.5:17). He has come into a whole new world, a world in which God’s pleasure is fully realized; he has passed from death to life, from the wrath of God into the satisfaction of God. This is what Eph. 1:11-14 is all about (please read). *“In him also we... being predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of His will”*, God’s purpose, God’s counsel has been realized in us because we are in Him! You may need to read the entire letter, and that of Romans and perhaps Galatians to fully appreciate this. Here are we, Gentiles, out-cast, dogs, a people of his wrath (Read Ephesians 2, and you will see the misery of a nation, a humanity outside Christ), but now in Him, we were predestined according to His purpose.

In 1 Thess 1:4, the Apostle puts it this way: *“knowing brethren beloved, your election of God”*. We were chosen, not in ourselves, not in our nationality, for we were all Gentiles, having no part in the covenant and without God in this world, but now we are chosen in Him, by virtue

of the work of his redemption, the breaking down of the middle wall of partition, abolishing the enmity in His flesh... (See Eph. 2:14,15), We, Gentiles, were admitted into God's purpose – and of course this becomes true to us at individual level when we hear the gospel and believe (Eph. 1:13). Therefore, the gospel proclamation is the key that opens this whole new world to humanity. If men do not hear of this plan of God in bringing His own Son; in coming in the person of Jesus Christ, then all of this grand purpose of God as far as they are concerned will be missed. If they do hear and refuse to believe, then they have chosen their lot, to live under the displeasure, and wrath of God as we see in Rom.1:18-32 (Please read). So you see, the Gospel message is like a coin with two sides, on the one side it reveals the satisfaction of God, and on the other side the wrath of God (see also John 3:16-18). Friend, which side of this coin are you standing this day?

CHAPTER 2: THE TRUST OF THE GOSPEL

**Text: 1 Thess. 2:1-12, John
2:24-25, 15:1-16, Eph. 3:1-20**

THE GOSPEL RECEIVED BY REVELATION

We have seen from our previous meditations, that the gospel is God's purpose encapsulated in Christ. Therefore, receiving the gospel, and its subsequent proclamation, means receiving Christ and proclaiming Him. Christ is received only as He is revealed to us by the Holy Spirit. We can only apprehend that which we have seen with the inner eyes. You cannot know Jesus by mere mental exercise, no man can know Him by the flesh (1 Cor. 2:10-13, 2 Cor.5:16). Even in His days in the flesh, many wrote Him off because all they could see of Him was that which was of the flesh. But if we must see Jesus, it must be by the Holy Spirit. He alone can reveal Jesus to us.

Last year, in our second CLR we considered the theme: "Seeing Him who is invisible". We did

say that even with the fall, God did not leave Himself without a witness in nature. Our response to that dim light of nature is a positive step toward a revelation of God. But the light of nature is grossly inadequate to lead men to God. Nevertheless, it is a witness, at least to the fact that God exist. If the devil can, he would have erased God completely from creation. To give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, it must be in the face of Christ. And we have said this is encapsulated in the Gospel. The proclamation of the gospel under the influence (the unction) of the Holy Ghost (2 Cor.4:5-6) disturbs the sleep of death, and awakens the soul, at least to the point where a man may exercise His moral agency to positively believe, or reject the Gospel.

Responding in faith, will of course leads to further revelation (Rom.1:16). The gospel in essence reveals Christ; Christ, the righteousness of God. We see God's justice in receiving Christ as a propitiation for our sin and a satisfaction of His justice. This inspires the heart to draw near to God, not on our merit, but on His merit. So then faith comes by hearing; and the hearing of faith imparts the Spirit, and purify the heart

(Acts 15:8-9). As we continue to respond positively (in faith) to the word of God, our heart is continually purified. This is the message John will have us understand in 1John 1; a call to fellowship in the revelation of Jesus through continued purification of the heart. We are told in scripture: “*Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.*” (Matt. 5:8)

THE NEED AND THE KIND OF MEN WHO WILL BEAR TRUST FOR THE GOSPEL

It is just here we want to dwell a little upon; purity of heart. This is so necessary to receiving and bearing trust for the gospel. I have always defined purity as that which have only one object. Purity of heart means have only one object, one affection in your heart. It reminds me of the hymn: Nothing between my soul and my saviour.

When we speak of the heart we speak of the spring of life; the center of our being, our whole affection. The object of the heart then is that which draws out our whole life, our admiration,

our commitment, and to put it in one comprehensive word: Our love. For that which has captured a man's heart, he is willing to give all, and to even die. This is the basis for trust. Trust as we know it is usually defined by relationship. Your relationship with a person will usually determine the kind of trust you will repose on that person. So when we come to this issue of bearing trust for the gospel, we are essentially touching the issue of our love for God, our personal relationship with Him. In our reading in John 15, we see that the disciple came to the point where the Lord said I call you not servants, but friends, and on that basis he could commit his trust to them, he could relate to them what the father is doing, the purpose of God was revealed to them, the gospel was committed to them.

It is along this line of our love, of our personal relationship with him, that God test our heart. It is not our ability that is tested, not our knowledge, but our heart; your heart for God (1Thess 2:4). He brings us to a point where we must give an honest answer to the question "*loveth thou me?...*" It is only on this basis that trust can be committed to a man. Read through

the epistle to the Thessalonians (See for example 2:7- 8, 11-12, 17-20, etc.), you can't miss seeing Paul's heart, his love for Christ and for the deep affection for the Church. Thus, Christ and the gospel was his supreme object for his life, he could say, "*the love of Christ constrains us*"; "*for me to live is Christ*". And it is primarily what the apostle looks out for in the Churches; their love for God and for one another. If any man, any company would bear trust for the Lord, it will be to the measure to which this is true of them.

Brethren, this matter of the heart is quite a delicate one. Scripture tells us "*the heart is deceitful above all things, who can know it*" (Jer. 17:9), it is good to read all that was before that verse to see that this very thing was said in relation to the vocation to which Israel was called (Read Jer.17:1-10), and which she failed woefully, her heart wholly seduced by idolatry, while they still make claim to the altar of the Lord; the altar of the Lord, the place of total consecration, and yet what do we see, sin on the altar! There, the Lord said I search the heart, I try the reins...

What does it mean for the lord to try the heart.

Do not think for a moment God does all such trying so that he may come to a certain knowledge. That is not the intent, for our God is omniscient. He knows all things and need not that anyone should tell Him what is in man. He actually puts us through the test, so that we may know our own heart and not be self-deceived. Therefore, all such test and trials should be counted as part of God's grace. His will is that as we come to know the true state of our heart, we would submit to him for a purging.

In the gospel by John, Chapter 2 verse 2, we read: *"But Jesus would not entrust Himself to them, for he knew all men"*. All you need to see the meaning of that statement, is to read right through the gospel by John. Jesus came to commit Himself to men, to be revealed as the Christ of God, the son of the living God (That is the central theme of John's gospel), yet He would not do that very thing for which He came, because of what is in man, and what his desperate and perverted heart would make out of that revelation.

See Chapter 6 for example, when He showed them a sign of himself, what did they attempt to

do? They wanted to turn him into an earthly king, and a utilitarian one for that matter. They were going to drag down all God's eternal purpose into bread, into temporal satisfaction, into something earthly. In order for Him to achieve His end, He had to put them through the test, He had to show them their heart, he said bluntly to them: *"You are seeking me not because you see the sign (not because you have come into a revelation of my person), but because you ate bread and were satisfied. Labor not for the meat that perish..."* By the time He was through, only the 12 were remaining, and even for them He had to pass them through severe testing. It was not an easy one for them, every day was a new test, until they came ultimately to the test of the cross. Their whole concept of a utilitarian Messiah was radically changed, their ambition for worldly power were gone completely. That cross I say was the ultimate test. Under it they saw their failure, those who said in Chapter 6, to whom shall we go to, and more particularly peter who said he was willing to die for the master, all of them fled away. After the resurrection, Jesus came to Peter and asked three times, *"Loveth thou me?"* This is what the master is after, a pure

love, a pure heart.

This matter of a deep personal love for the Master must be settled for any man who would be entrusted with the gospel. I do hope you realize that when we speak of love we are not talking of sheer emotionalism, of course none of that can stand through the test of love. We are talking of that deep committal of the heart to God, the measure of which is obedience to the Lord. God will continually test this, and purify the heart by the cross. For any man to ever bear divine trust, his heart must be continually cultivated so that nothing comes between his soul and the Savior. This is what John 15 is all about (Read v. 1 to 15)

You know, this was the great conflict Israel of Old came to; a conflict to keep their heart from the idols all around them; the seduction that the nations around meant to them, the threat, all these so that their heart could turn away from the Lord, and again and again they did fail. For us also, here lies our greatest battle, the battle against idolatry; the idols of self (self-trust, self-satisfaction, self-attainment, etc.), and the idol

of the world - all its pomp and shows, all its aggrandizement and amusement. The way to keep the heart pure is to live continually in the shadow of the cross.

It seems the greater the trust to be born, the greater the test, the cross and indeed the suffering. For Paul to operate in such high level of trust, for the abundance of revelation to be committed to him, it has to come along with a torn in the flesh, to keep him from being puffed up. His were such severe suffering that he said, we despair even of life, our heart felt the sentence of death, so that we might not rely on ourselves but on God who raises the dead (2 Cor.1:8-10). He would say, I have no confidence in the flesh, the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, I dwell with you in weakness, etc. All this were wrought in a real way into his constitution. Paul was a broken man indeed. And you know, a broken and a contrite heart He will not despise, it is to such as are poor and contrite He commits Himself (See 34:18, Isa. 66:2).

This severe testing and breaking keeps the heart conscious of his need for Christ. As the Lord shows Himself as all we ever need, as the only

answer to all our troubles, He becomes all together lovely, He becomes our all-in-all. Living then becomes living for Jesus only. This was true of Paul, and of all who have born trust for the gospel. They could boldly say we left all, we sold all else that we might buy this field of treasure, we counted all things as rubbish, that we might gain Christ. Can this be said of you and I, if not, may we not cry that the Lord will not spare us of His dealing until we are fit to bear trust? There is no other way of coming into this trust, and God is willing to wait, no matter how long, until our heart is properly dealt, before he would commit anything reasonable into our trust.

Perhaps God's dealing with Abraham may help us see this point a little more clearer. Here was Abram, in the midst of idol worship, all its permissiveness and fancies, the word of the Lord came to him: "*get thee out of thy fathers house and of thy kindred... to a land I will show thee*". (Gen.12:1-2). That was the first breaking, and God pursued this course with him right to the end. He had to be separated not only from his people but from all other people, and to live as a

pilgrim. What tragic experience he had when he went down into Egypt, how he learnt his lesson in a hard way. He stopped running around looking for economic opportunity. Even when the issue of strive came with Lot wanting the best parts of the grazing area, Abram simply asked Lot to choose. Lot chose the plains of Sodom, a country that looks economically promising and secured. But Abraham saw right through, that that was a nation without foundation, without Christ. He had learnt to view things from the mountain top, from God's perspective, from eternal consideration. Thus his heart was set to seek only that city which hath foundation, whose builder and maker is God (Heb. 11). That city is Christ. If our heart is set on this, we will have no reason to strive with men over temporal things, things which have been marked for eternal demolition. Abraham's heart was so weaned that he would not even partake of legitimate spoils of battle, his single reason is that he wants God alone to be his "*exceeding great reward*" (Gen.14:22-15:1). May we come to that point where we are looking for nothing else in this world but God.

With all of this dealings, God's end was yet to be

secured in Abram. His biggest test came along the line of his call to which he has devoted his heart. The promise which he kept in view was to him and his seed (the nation that will come out of him), and here he was already aging, no sign of even having one seed. What a test indeed when it seems that God's very word to which you have committed your self is not coming true. Well, God was more concern about training him to handle that seed. Committing the seed to him was not something difficult with God, but if His purpose must not be jeopardized, then His man must have been trained to bear divine trust. Certain issues of the heart, subtle issues perhaps must first be dealt with. Imagine what it would have looked like if Sarah was pregnant, and yet Abraham was going about telling the kings that she is his sister, the woman would be considered a harlot isn't it, and her body would have been defiled. In fact, this almost became the case. This matter had to be dealt with - you know this was tied to his life, his personal security. He had to face the fear of perhaps being killed in that wicked land, and his wife being taken away. It was just this God wanted, so it is not enough to be weaned from economic pursuit, but we must

give up our life too.

Next, he had to be weaned from his own man-made options; the Ishmael option. How difficult it is most times for God to get us out of our options. We seem to have many options, many man-made ideas as to how to fulfil the purpose of God, and all these stands in contradiction to that very purpose. After 13 whole years, Abraham was still praying for the success of this his “Ishmael Project” (and should I say unfortunately God answered his prayer - God’s dealing with me lately has made me very careful of what I bring before Him in prayer, He might grant it, and down the line I discover it was an Ishmael Project all along), God had to disrupt him from that project through a serious domestic crisis. It was made clear to him, in Isaac shall your seed be called; in other words, Ishmael is not recognized. Sarah said to him, cast away this bond woman and her son, for the son of this bond woman will not share in the inheritance; He has no part in that divine purpose. Even though it was painful to him, Abraham had to let go.

God waited until Abraham was weak in body,

and Sarah's womb was dead, it was at this point he committed the seed to them. This is so that it would be obvious that it is not something born out of the flesh, nor of human making. This will secure God's end, and Abraham's faith and love will be wholly on the Lord. But then we see that this very gift, was becoming an "innocent idol" in the heart of the Patriarch. God will not share His place with anything, in our heart, no matter how innocent that thing is. On a fateful day, the Lord call out to Abraham, and the instruction was "*Take Isaac thy only son, and offer him to me as a burnt offering*" (Gen.22:2). What a test! Early the next morning, Abraham was off to execute the order, the Lord watched him to the point where he raised the knife over Isaac, for Abraham's Isaac was dead, God had secured His end, the heart of His friend is completely purged, and God could commit Himself and his eternal purpose wholly to Abraham (See Gen.22:16-18).

Brethren, this is God's call to us today, this is the need of heaven concerning bearing the divine trust, it is for men whose heart is fully set on the Lord. "*The eyes of the lord runs to and fro throughout the earth to show himself strong to those whose*

heart is perfect toward Him” (2 Chronicles 16:19). God is in search of such men to commit His purpose; the gospel into their hand. Of such steward, Scripture said the only requirement is faithfulness. What is faithfulness (those who are married will perhaps get the picture clearer), it is that unsoiled commitment, born out of a depth of love. They must be men of pure conscience, for the mystery can only be held in a pure conscience (1 Tim.3:9). If God’s purpose in the gospel suffers or is hindered in our time, it will not be because of the fierce opposition, it will not be because the enemy is so willy, but simply this, the lack of this kind of men. We must first ensure there is no offence to God’s purpose in ourselves, before we could face the opposition without. May we end our meditation this day by just reading 2 Cor. 6: 3-10.

CHAPTER 3: MAKING THE MOST OF THE DIVINE TRUST

1 Thess. 2:1- 5, Eph. 3:1-20, 1

Cor. 9:1-26, 15:9-10, Luke

19:11-27

**The Conflict in bearing the trust of the gospel
in this end times, and what it issues unto in the
Ages to come.**

We will start our meditation from the last passage we just read, specifically v.26: *“Everyone who has, more will be given...”* In considering how we might make the most of the divine trust, we must first be conscious that to a certain degree, something has been committed to our trust. Our attitude towards that will determine the possibility of greater commitment. It would be best to consider that what we have now is but a testing, a preparation unto greater usefulness. And until the end of our lives here, that is essentially the case; for what is this life all

about, but a probation for a more eternal service.

Those of you who have served probation in your places of employment can tell how carefully you had to do your job least you be disqualified. It is just this I want us to have at the back of our mind as we consider this issue before us. It would not have been an issue of much carefulness, if the conditions were all favorable toward our bearing this trust, but you see, we are to bear this trust in a land in which the citizens have resolved that *we would not have this Man reign over us!* The enemy seems to have a keen smell of those being considered for this trust, and very early, almost before we are even conscious of God's interest on our lives, the enemy begins to unleash unprecedented attacks.

The trust of the gospel is therefore bound up with this matter of conflict. We have touched briefly upon that in passing earlier, and have seen that such conflict, when correctly handled are essential to the purification of the heart. In fact, our triumph in these conflicts is the very bearing of this trust. We see Paul saying, *we preached the gospel in much conflict*, and in Gal.3:16 he said *"It was because of an illness*

that I first preached the gospel to you” – conditions which ordinary should be an excuse for withdrawing, were considered as the very reason for which the trust is borne. Strange, isn’t it?

These conflicts, are to remind us of the great and ageless purposes bound up with our trust; a purpose to which the enemy is sworn to oppose in every age and with all viciousness. And this should be expected, because our trust will issue to his complete dethronement and banishment into everlasting chains. We can see clearly how this is related if we read Eph.3 and Eph. 6 side by side. Take note of Eph. 3:9 -10. Our trust bears its mark not only on earth, but even more on the heavenly realms, and it is this heavenly realms that this principalities and powers seek to dominate, and in a sense are actually holding an unhindered sway. It is here, we are to register the victory of Calvary, and the triumph of Christ over principalities and powers as his church, the fullness of Him that fills all in all; giving no room for any thing that contradicts God’s thought. It is this very thing that the enemy is set to repudiate. What warfare he puts up, to make

sure the gospel has no real impart in our lives, our families and in our society. If only he could get you to give up the hope of your salvation, to throw away your shield of faith, or to pierce through your breastplate of righteousness, how that could frustrate the purpose of God as far as you are concern.

So you see, we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities... (all of the phrase that follows is only to describe this one personality, and to give us an insight into his wiles). All of these things we are seeing today; the moral perversity, the opposition to the gospel in many lands and in many subtle forms, the outright persecutions, the corruption in government and raging poverty and privation in the nations, the wars, are all the schemes of the enemy. He seeks to re-engineer the creation after his own image. He sets up demonic forces that influences the systems of this world; no system is spared: the socio-culture, the government, and even in religious systems is being reset to contradict God's purpose. The psalmist puts it this way in Psalms 82:5, "*all the foundations of the earth are out of course*"; they are shaken, God purpose is being challenged, the enemy is

raging (See also Psalms 2). What is the answer to all of this? **It is the gospel!** That is clearly shown to us in Ps.82:8, *“Rise up, O God, judge the earth, for all the nations are your inheritance”*.

The gospel is God’s instrument for judging the earth, in it we see that the prince of this world has been judged. It is the means of claiming the Divine inheritance in the nations. The gospel will undo all that the enemy has done or is doing, will turn the world upside down and take every thought (ideology) captive to the obedience of Christ (See 2 Cor.10:1-6). Indeed, history shows that wherever the trust of the gospel has been correctly borne, this has been the result; families and nations are turned around. Oh, that we might see this once again.

I do believe the Lord is after this just right now in His calling us to bear the trust for the gospel, it is this that the Lord has in mind; the inheritance of the nations; to raise up many sons unto glory, that by the manifestation of the sons of God, creation might be delivered from this present bondage into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. We must therefore brace up to this cosmic conflict; it is even more critical now, the

warfare is fully escalated, because the enemy knows that he has a very short time. God's purpose will ultimately prevail, there will definitely be overcomers, but in the meantime, the enemy will do all he can to deny the Lord of His inheritance in the nation, of the fruit of His travail, amongst any nation, and peoples to whom we failed to bear the light of the gospel. We have a very key responsibility therefore at this time.

This responsibility and the conflicts that comes with it is most clearly brought to our view when we look at the book of the Revelation of John. We see at the end of Chapter 10 the mandate to prophecy, among many nations, tribe and people once again. In Chapter 11 we see the meaning of that in the two witness; the Church (or the overcomers if you like), bearing the trust of the gospel amidst the worst adversity and satanic opposition. They had to face the very anti-Christ, and his system: Babylon, being fully set up as it were.

[For those who care to do some more technical studies it will do you good to bear in mind that

the visions in Revelation 10 to 18 is largely panoramic. You may want to take particular note of the 1260 days that was repeated in 11:3, 12:6, and 13:5, and also take note of the use of the word heaven and earth as representing the two realms in which this battle is raging, and are being brought into view panoramically. Also note that much of those numberings are symbolic]

What is Babylon? It is that which stands in total opposition and contradiction to Jerusalem. We know that Jerusalem represent the glory of God in the midst of his people, the excellency of Jacob (Ps.47:4), the mountain of God's holiness, the joy of the whole earth (See Ps. 48). Babylon stands in contradiction to all these. You can see that as you read the Old Testament; when Babylon was at her peak, Jerusalem was at her crest; a rumble. Babylon itself plundered her, destroyed her temple, ripped off unborn babies, and you think of all the despicable things they did that alarmed the Prophet Habakkuk. Jerusalem was carried captive into Babylon. But in the midst of all these, you have a little company of God's people even in Babylon itself,

standing for that which is the ideal of Jerusalem.

To speak in the light of our theme, they were holding unto the trust of the gospel. We see Shedrac, Meshac, Abednego and Daniel, that system could not get into them. They would not be defiled by the king's meat. Their dress and names were changed, but they just couldn't blend. Jerusalem was dominating in their thought, three times every day for the long years Daniel spent in exile, he would open his window towards Jerusalem, Zion was in his heart, not even the threat of the lions den could take that away. God's purpose was kept in view, amidst the imposing imageries and fancies of Babylon. Well, it is just these conditions we are faced with in the end time. What I have just said, is right now playing out in our time. The mystery of iniquity is already at work, and I think it is much more at work today, than when the apostle penned down those words.

Do not let anyone fool you that these are mere speculations and religious fantasies. These conflicts are real and spiritual in nature, and if

you do not recognize this, you may be taken unawares, and become a causality in this end times. We must therefore, not live causally. You can't just put your kids in any school, or expose them to just any cartoons. You cannot just pick up any job without considering how that organization stand in relation to the purpose of God – you just may end up working for the very anti-Christ if you are not careful. Even things as little as the cloths you put on must be given thoughtful consideration in prayers, do not say it does not really matter. Perhaps not many seemed to have been gripped by that statement: “*They shall neither buy or sell except they have the mark of the beast...*” That has been much in my consciousness in recent times. Think of that for a moment; the enemy is setting up a system (and it alarms me how fast this system is gaining grounds in every aspect of society) that will make it impossible (humanly speaking) to live without his mark; his identity, his spirit of Mammon.

Yet in the midst of this system, we must have overcomers, we must bear the trust of the gospel,

we must preach the everlasting gospel. (See Rev.14:1-8, c/f Rev. 7:2-4,9-17 (Emphasis on v.14). Note that they were sealed, they were marked, sealed with the Holy Spirit, therefore they had no place for the mark of the beast; the spirit of Satan.) Don't let anyone get you confuse as to the number 144,000, or the mention of the tribe of Israel. What all that points to is the divine government of God. Those who have held the trust of Christ amidst those who said this man will not reign over us; these men, are now rewarded with the trust of the divine government unto the ages of the ages. All of those figures is interpreted to us in v. 9, that government is same as that multitude. And we see how they got into that position: *"These are the ones who came out of the great tribulation..."*, *"those who were not defiled by women"* – what does that mean? see Rev. 2:20, women here refers to the seducing influence of the world system.

What are we to do with all of this? Live in fear? Not at all. This is a call to live in faith. The only way to survive in a time when you can neither

“buy nor sell” except you have the mark is to have our daily sustenance by faith. The Scripture: The righteous shall live by faith must become real to us. I do hope you remember that it is in relation to Babylon that Habakkuk made this prophecy.

Albert Barnes summaries the whole prophesy of Habakkuk thus:

“This prophecy is not less distinct, but figurative. Rather it is the declaration of God's deliverance of His people, not from the Chaldees only, but at all times. The evil is concentrated in one Evil one, who stands over against the One anointed. "Thou art gone forth for the salvation of Thy people; for salvation with Thine anointed One. Thou crushedst the head out of the house of the wicked One, laying bare the foundation unto the neck," i.e., smiting the house at once, above and below; with an utter destruction. It belongs then the more to all times, until the closing strife between evil and good, Christ and Antichrist, the anomos and the Lord. It includes the Chaldee, and each great Empire which opposes itself to the kingdom of God, and declares that, as God delivered His people of old so He would unto the end.”

At a time when Babylon was mesmerizing the heritage of God, Habakkuk cried in despair, and went up to the hills of God, and the vision was given to him, and he declared: the just shall live by faith, i.e. by believing in what has been shown. What was that which was shown? What is the vision that inspires this faith? We see that when we go over to the New Testament, in Rom. 1:16-17: *"I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."*

That vision is Jesus Christ, as revealed in the gospel. Therefore, the prophet cried: *The earth, shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God as the water covers the sea. (Hab.2:14).* What a vision! what faith it inspires! It is this very faith that is the victory that overcomes the world (Babylon and its system). But this faith only overcomes as it is expressed in our bearing the trust for the gospel. We read in Rev.12:11

“they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death”

That testimony we have said is the gospel. They went forth to the mighty conflict, and proved Christ to be Lord indeed.

Just one more thought as we tie up this. What does all this conflict, this whole issue of bearing trust issues unto in the ages to come. We have said, it is unto the recovery of God’s eternal plan. But what do we mean by this. God’s eternal plan is that we may bear eternal trust for him. All of this trust here on earth is probationary. We see those who came through this probation, that company defined in v.14-17, and the issue of all of those great tribulations in v.15: “Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple”

Definite and practical way of taking responsibility for the gospel

As we begin to bring our meditations in this conference to a close. It is possible that many of

you may be wandering in what practical way can be bring all these talks of holding trust for the gospel to bear on our day to day living. I think this is a good way to conclude. The Lord will have us be definite in this matter of bearing trust. We must not be as one that beats the air. Even though we have tried to cover some of these practical grounds by way of seminars in this conference, I think it is important we tie it up here.

Before the Lord Jesus ascended, He told the disciples that they will be his witness, both in Jerusalem, Judah, all Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth. This was not something vague, it was clearly understood, and we could see from the book of Acts, and the epistles, how they took that up practically. We may not be suggesting that we copy and implement exactly what we see in the book of Acts, because current conditions may not make that necessary, but we must figure out the underlying principles and practically apply them to our situation.

May we note the following areas in which we

are expected to hold the trust of the gospel:

1. The Home or family life (See 1 Tim.3:1-5):

When we look at the early believers, we cannot miss the emphasis they place on holding the trust of the gospel first in their homes. Whole families were baptized, Churches were mainly in the homes, mainly in the homes of the leaders, so that their home life is not hidden at all. In the epistles, we have several instructions regarding the home life. This then is a very significant front in which we are called to bear the trust for the gospel. Let me say this very emphatically; you cannot bear the trust of the gospel successfully if you fail here. The scripture we read clearly told us that if you don't have a good home life, no responsibility should be given to you. Some will say but Wesley did bore trust to the gospel even with a terrible home front, that is a very rear exception in history, but we can say that as to his own duty to his wife, he stayed obedient to scriptural principle regarding how to stay with an unbelieving wife; he didn't put her away, he endured it all. Well, that should be a very grave warning to those of you yet to be

married. Before you do, ask yourself can I hold the trust of the gospel in the home if I get joined to this brother/sister?

2. Business/Career (Col. 3:22-25, 1Thess.4:11-12, 2Thess. 3:6-11): This is a very critical front in which we must bear the trust of the gospel. Paul in bearing trust for the gospel took on a craft primarily to show the Thessalonians an example of how they may bear trust for the gospel in business/career. We were told in Acts that *“those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the gospel”*. Do not assume that they were doing nothing else except preaching, they carried on in their businesses, and it became a platform for bearing their trust. The dominating thought on their heart is preaching the gospel. We see Aquila and Priscilla for example, their craft was key in their partnership with apostle Paul (Acts 18:1-3). Before you take on any career, or if you feel convinced God have lead you into any business/career ask yourself what are the opportunities for holding the trust of the gospel in this place. One major way to bear trust for the gospel in the business world is to stay true to biblical principles of excellence, diligence,

discipline, integrity, not covetous, etc. I highly recommend Larry Burkit Book: “*Business by the Book*” I think it is a classic work on how Christians can bear trust for the gospel, Burkit gave testimony of how he and those the Lord used him to guide have practice these principles, and they have seen unbelieving colleagues and staff come to faith because of their example.

1. **Holding our Resources as a trust for the gospel (1 Tim. 6:17-19).** We are not to trust in our riches, but to hold them as a trust to the Lord. We must settle it on our heart, the resources in our disposal is not given to us to spend on our lust and pleasure, but for the furtherance of the gospel. The PWC 2023 Seminar from *Brother Donatus* have adequately dealt with this, and I need not repeat it.
2. **Prayer (1 Thess. 5:17):** We cannot talk too much on this. The very nature of our trust makes it impossible to be borne without much praying. Whether you are bearing that trust at home front or at your business, this should be the least you can

do. But beyond this general expectation, there are those who have taken on this ministry of prayer in a special way. The Apostles said “... *we shall give ourselves to prayer*”. Every one of us must have extraordinary times of prayers, but there are those who have taken on that as a trust, they are regular and instant at it, and heaven can awaken them to bear certain burdens for the nations and his cause. Oh. may I be such a man.

Full-Time Workers in Gospel Proclamation: This is very important and delicate. A lot of things are being confused in our time as “ministry unto the Lord”. Ministry has largely been reduced to any other career, and many times to the promotion of some human system; both its end and the spirit with which it is carried out can hardly be said it is “ministry unto the Lord”, and yet men are deceived with much frenzy activities, and promotions of men thinking they are advancing in ministry. May the Lord help us, who feel specially called into full time service of

the gospel. There is the temptation to go the other extreme. Some have in recent time relegated and de-emphasized the idea of full-time ministry, let us be very careful. The labor in the word and prayer can be so tasking as to require full time attention. For those engage in such labor, scripture tells us to give them double honor. Peter and the other apostle were full-time laborers (1 Cor.9:5-12). Though Paul had a craft, he also received support from the churches financially. This issue of full-time ministry is a point in which we must be very careful. There are diversity of administration but the same Lord. When we look back in history, we see divers ways in which people took on the gospel, some to foreign land, some to prisons, some in the city, and some to children, and other specialized ways. There seem to be a stereotyped idea prevailing in our clime as though ministry is only that which is done in the local assembly. This is because of the way most of our local assemblies are administered, and it puts a serious limitation to the gospel; other aspect of the

work does not get very good funding and commitment from the brethren and some have been forced to metamorphose into a local assembly and tied down with that. I will advise you to get much counsel, and to pray much if you feel the Lord is leading you to bear the trust of the gospel in full-time ministry.

The Peril of Failing in our Trust

There seem to be no better way in concluding this meditation than to re-iterate the importance of this trust by looking at the peril in failing in our trust. Paul was ever so conscious of this, and gave several warning in this regard. (Read 1 Cor.9:16-27). *Lest when I have preached to others I myself should be “a cast way”*. This reminds us much of Jesus’ word in John 15:6, *“If anyone does not abide in Me he is cast off...”* All of that is in relation to fruit bearing, to fulfilling their vocation. Was this not the very reason Israel was rejected? John the Baptist did warn them in Matt 3:10, *“the Axe is laid to the root... every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down...”* and a few years later Jesus told them: *“Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of*

God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it” (Matt. 21:21)
What a terrible judgement!

As a nation they lost that vocation, (See Rom. 11:1-19) all they have now is “a remnant according to the election of grace” we know what that mean: “election of grace”, that is the same election by which the gentiles are brought, no longer that covenant election that was guaranteed to everyone born as a Jew, they lost it, they lost that special place as a chosen race, the chosen race is now the Church. Right in the middle of telling us the judgement that befell Israel, Paul warned the Gentiles the possibility of being cast off (See Romans 11:19-22). Well this re-echoes Jesus’ last warning to the Churches: *“I will come quickly and remove your lampstand from its place – unless you repent”*..., *“I will spew you out of my mouth”* (Rev. 2:5, 3:16).

Fearful isn’t it? Look back at history and see what has happened to those churches. Your very testimony in the gospel will be taken away because you are failing in your trust, you are not bearing that trust rightly. You have left your first

love, there have come in some thoughts contrary to God's thought, some false teachings, some compromise with the world. These are what the Lord was warning the churches about, these are the very issues that constitute failure in the trust of the gospel.

Perhaps the example of Eli will show us how dangerous to toil with our trust (1 Sam.2:12-17, 22-36; 4:19- 22). He was the custodian of the knowledge of God, but his own sons did not know the Lord. What was the result - Icabod, the glory has departed!

It is better we were never entrusted with the gospel than to fail in the trust. If we stand on the grace of God, we will have no reason to fail.

(Written by Val Obioha) - PWC 2023

ABOUT GOSPEL ALLIANCE

Welcome to Gospel Alliance, the Christian body that aims to raise mature and balanced Christian workers who will lead reformation and revival in the Church. Our vision is for the Church to fulfil her vocation in this age, and we believe that this can be achieved through prayer, fellowship, training, and a strong emphasis on family life.

Our mission is to provide a platform for Christian workers to come together in fellowship and receive ministerial support. We believe that through this, we can labor for the reformation and revival of the Church, as we seek to align ourselves with the Word of God.

As part of our mission, we are committed to mobilizing the Church to take responsibility for evangelism and missions in all its various forms. We believe that the Church has a vital role to play in bringing the good news of Jesus Christ to a lost and hurting world.

Join us on this journey as we seek to make a difference in the world, one life at a time. Send us a mail at gospelalliance2016@gmail.com or call **08163331057, 08160530658 or 08137048222.**